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**MAYOR LORI LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES \$6 MILLION INVESTMENT TOWARD
COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS FROM WEST SIDE UNITED**

*Funding will foster economic development and quality-of-life enhancements in Austin,
North Lawndale, Humboldt Park and other West Side neighborhoods*

CHICAGO --- Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today joined leaders from the American Medical Association and West Side United to announce a \$6 million allocation for community improvements across the West Side. The funding will be allocated by West Side United (WSU) as low-interest loans to local businesses and other organizations for economic development projects, health care initiatives, and quality-of-life improvements focused largely on Austin and the greater West Side. In addition to funding local priorities for residents and businesses, the community driven investments will also work to support one of Mayor Lightfoot's key initiatives, INVEST South/West.

"The investments we are making today with West Side United, the American Medical Association, and other community funding partners will allow us to improve the health of our residents and to drive quality-of-life improvements for our communities that have long been overlooked," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "We thank these partners for responding to our call to action with INVEST South/West and for playing a crucial role in fostering inclusive economic growth for these communities on the West Side. With new city partners on board, this marks another step forward in my administration's commitment to ensuring community-based health care serving all of our residents, regardless of ZIP code."

The loans will be provided through four community lenders: the Chicago Community Loan Fund, Local Initiatives Support Corp. (LISC), IFF and Accion Chicago and will be focused on investments for improvements in the Austin community area and on the West Side of the city as a whole.

"Our goal is to collaborate with multisector partners to ensure that West Side communities, who have been historically disinvested, benefit from local investments that provide affordable housing, corridor redevelopment and capital improvements



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that promote healthy, safe and economically viable neighborhoods,” WSU Executive Director Ayesha Jaco said.

“Right here in Chicago, West Side United and its incredible partner collaborators are addressing economic opportunity, housing, access to healthy food and other social determinants,” said AMA CEO and Executive Vice President James L. Madara, M.D. “The work will not be quick, but as part of our ongoing work to address health inequities and improve health outcomes, the AMA is committed to a sustained effort in the area where we have been headquartered since 1888. Through these efforts, we believe Chicago can serve as a model to help other parts of the nation facing similar gaps in health equity across their neighborhoods.”

Formed in 2017, WSU is a collaborative of people and organizations committed to making Chicago’s West Side a healthier and more vibrant place to live. The collaborative includes Rush University Medical Center, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago, AMITA Health, Cook County Health, Sinai Health System, University of Illinois Hospital & Health Sciences System, the Illinois Medical District, and financial partner Northern Trust. The loan funding includes \$2 million from the group’s newest member, the American Medical Association.

“With the availability of this community-based funding, entrepreneurs and other organizations will have another potential resource to finance neighborhood improvements that benefit the entire West Side,” said Maurice Cox, commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, which administers the Invest South/West initiative.

WSU’s service area includes Austin, East and West Garfield Park, Humboldt Park, Little Village, the Near West Side, North Lawndale, Pilsen, and West Town, where businesses and other organizations will be able to apply for loans over the next two to five years.

“These community investments are aimed at one overarching goal: closing the 16-year gap in life expectancy between residents living downtown and in certain communities on the West Side. The health conditions that contribute to the gap – like the higher incidence of chronic disease, maternal and infant mortality and violence – are often driven by root causes including food access, housing and trauma. Bold, community-led development strategies are an essential part of any plan to eliminate health inequities.

“Health care institutions should broaden their roles in the communities they serve by improving the economic conditions that drive poor health,” added Omar Lateef, M.D., chief executive officer of Rush University Medical Center, a WSU partner.



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“Hospitals – the economic engines in the communities they serve-- can do just that by directing a very small portion of their investment portfolios to allow thousands of small businesses and community organizations excluded from the traditional financial sector to create jobs and opportunity.”

INVEST South/West is an unprecedented community improvement initiative launched by Mayor Lightfoot that is marshalling \$750 million in public funding toward commercial corridor improvements within 10 neighborhoods on Chicago’s West and South sides. More than \$30 million in private-sector funding to date includes contributions from BMO Harris Bank, Starbucks and Fifth Third Bank.

“We want to create thriving, healthy communities all over the city,” said Department of Public Health Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “Chicago’s healthcare sector is stepping up in a big way to help us do just that – not only by providing core health services, but also as employers and investors. Collaborations like WSU are addressing health inequities by directing their resources where they’re needed most: in the West Side neighborhoods they serve.”

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